



PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: Carrie Sloan or Harald Stavenas  
(202) 225-2539

## Hunter Statement on 9-11 Commission Hearings

### *Hamilton States Need for Refining Some Commission Recommendations*

Washington, D.C. – August 11, 2004 – U.S. Rep. Duncan Hunter (R-CA), Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, released the following statement regarding the Committee’s hearings on the Report of the Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States:

“This week, the committee held four hearings, a series of meetings with Department of Defense officials, and a meeting with family members who lost loved ones on September 11, 2001, to examine the findings and recommendations of the 9-11 Commission’s final report. I would encourage all Members of Congress to review the House Armed Services Committee’s proceedings as we move toward developing legislation to address the problems identified by the Commission. We learned a great deal this week which should guide our work.

“First, as the Commission Chairman and Vice Chairman made clear, winning the war on terror will require more than a simple reorganization of the federal government. As was pointed out, we cannot organize our way to victory; it’s going to take a comprehensive strategy using all of our political, economic, diplomatic, military, and intelligence capabilities to prevail. We must spend as much time tackling those issues as we do dealing with organizational reform.

“Second, there’s broad agreement on the need for intelligence reforms. The turf battles and lack of

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information sharing between the FBI and CIA prior to 9-11 can't be allowed to repeat itself. President Bush's endorsement of two key Commission recommendations to create a National Intelligence Director and a centralized terrorism intelligence center will go a long way to address this problem. While there are still details to be worked out, I believe we are all moving in the right direction.

"Third, I believe there is also agreement that whatever we do, we need to make sure that our combat forces are not deprived of the intelligence they need to prevail on the battlefield. Under the direction of Secretary Rumsfeld, the military is currently transforming itself to meet the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century; most of that transformation is dependent on even more closely integrating intelligence and warfighting. The commissioners, most Members of Congress, the Administration, and certainly our uniformed soldiers, all expressed a commitment to protecting that link.

"Fourth, one important point that emerged from these hearings is that you can't simply draw an arbitrary line between tactical military intelligence and strategic intelligence any more. While that may make sense in Washington, DC, it doesn't work in today's battlefield. As General Ray Odierno, who just returned from commanding the 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division in Iraq told us, Washington's strategic intelligence is our troops' tactical intelligence. Thus, we need to be careful where we draw such lines in reorganizing in Washington, DC, so that we don't inadvertently put more bureaucracy, distance and obstacles between our troops and an increasingly critical tool in today's modern battlefield. I am encouraged that the Commission's Vice-Chairman, Lee Hamilton, acknowledged the importance of this point and a willingness to continue to think through and possibly refine the Commission's position on this critical point. Hamilton stated: *'I think the committee has helped us in understanding the importance of the tactical military intelligence. And I think some of our recommendations can be refined. And we certainly want to work with you to do it.'* And also: *'I think the questions that are being asked here are helpful to us and causes me to think that we need to refine some of our thinking in this very important area, and we will try to do that.'*

"Finally, it appears to me that the issue of the sharing and distribution of intelligence is the key problem that requires our attention. Whether it's up or down the military chain, or horizontally across the intelligence community or across the so-called foreign/domestic divide, ensuring the free flow of this intelligence

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information across our government needs to be one of our principal goals.

“We all take the 9-11 Commission’s final report very seriously. I am very encouraged to see that many of the suggested Commission’s recommendations were implemented by the Bush Administration even before the report came out. Given our findings this week, we will work with the 9-11 Commission and move at a deliberate speed to continue to improve our intelligence apparatus. However, if we opt to make changes dictated more by politics than by the demands of national security, we make ourselves more vulnerable and cause the nation more harm.”

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